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AUTHOR McGough, Robert L.; Vincent, John
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ABSTRACT

This monograph is one of 12 that address various topics in the area of CETA/education linkages. They were designed to provide those individuals interested in the development and implementation of CETA/education linkages with information that will serve to enhance the quality of existing programs and facilitate the efficient and effective development of new programs. This monograph provides the reader with basic insight into the process of counseling the CETA client. The material is presented in five major sections: (1) What Is CETA Counseling?, (2) The Role of the CETA Counselor, (3) Characteristics of CETA Clients, (4) Counseling Components, and (5) Counseling Methods, Techniques, and Processes. Counselor job aspects include orientation, enrollment, support services, and intervention. Counseling components are intake counseling, testing and assessment, crisis counseling, group training and counseling, individual employment counseling, provision of ancillary and support services, and placement and followup. (CT)

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**Counseling the CETA
Client**

**By Robert L. McGough
and
John Vincent**

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Robert L. McGough, Ph.D., is currently a member of the faculty of the division of Vocational and Technical Education, of Virginia Tech. He is a specialist in Manpower (employment and training) and special needs occupational training. Dr. McGough is a nationally recognized Employment and Training and Special Needs consultant. He has over 13 years experience in various administrative positions relating to disadvantaged training design and operation. He has administered both the Department of Labor sponsored disadvantaged training programs, and those under the auspices of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

He has been nationally involved in employment and training services as the Executive Director for two area manpower institutes for the development of staff (AMIDS). Dr. McGough has over 40 publications in the employment and training area and has administered over 56 funded contracts relating to the development and administration of programs for disadvantaged youth and adults.

John J. Vincent, Research Associate and Administrative Assistant in the Vocational and Technical Education Division at Virginia Tech, received a B.S. degree in Business Administration and an M.Ed. in Vocational Education from the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He received an Ed.D. in Vocational Education from the Pennsylvania State University with a minor emphasis in Labor Relations.

Dr. Vincent has had previous experience as Head of Cooperative Education Programs, Job Placement Specialist, and Coordinator of Adult Ed.-CETA related programs at a vocational-technical school in Pennsylvania. Prior to employment at Virginia Tech, he served as a Project Director at Penn State University where he conducted studies to evaluate State Funded Vocational Education Curriculum Projects in Pennsylvania and more recently a study entitled: A Profile of CETA Staff Personnel in Pennsylvania and Their Perceived Training Needs.

Forward

Since the enactment of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), 1973, there has been a continued need to develop cooperative relationships between (1) local prime sponsors, (2) public and private educational institutions, and (3) community based organizations. While this concern seems to exist for a variety of reasons, it is commonly recognized that poor communications is a major barrier to effective cooperative relationships in Employment and Training (CETA). This problem continues as little information has been disseminated providing ideas or models for the collaboration of efforts in the employment and training field. The provisions of both CETA and the Vocational Education Act of 1976 have noted this problem.

Recently, the Virginia Governor's Employment and Training Council funded a three phase project titled: "Inservice, Technical Assistance, and Information Dissemination Service for CETA/Education Linkages." One phase of this project provided for the development and dissemination of twelve monographs. The monograph series addresses various topics in the area of CETA/Education Linkages. The purpose of the monographs is to provide those individuals interested in the development and implementation of CETA/Education Linkages with information that will serve to enhance the quality of existing programs and facilitate the efficient and effective development of new programs.

COUNSELING THE CETA CLIENT

Introduction

Of vital importance to the effectiveness of Employment and Training programs provided by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) is the role played by the CETA counselor. Although the process of counseling or the word counseling may mean different things to different people, one should not underestimate its contribution to the success of Employment and Training programs. More importantly one should not underestimate the importance of effective counseling to the success of individuals who receive counseling services (i.e. the client).

This monograph will provide the reader with basic insight into the process of counseling the CETA client. The material is presented in five major sections: (a) what is CETA counseling?, (b) the purpose and role of the CETA counselor, (c) characteristics of CETA clients, (d) CETA counseling components, and (e) a brief description of proven methods, techniques and processes.

What is CETA counseling?

Stated simply, CETA counseling is the process of helping disadvantaged persons who are participants or clients enrolled in CETA programs to understand themselves better in their personal and occupational lives. The problem with this definition of CETA counseling, however, is that it does not tell us how the process of counseling occurs or what counseling is. For now, let us examine several definitions of counseling. The process of counseling itself will be presented later after some basic groundwork is laid.

The introduction of this monograph alluded to the concept that counseling has many different meanings. Tyler (1961) said, "counseling is one of those words that everyone understands but no two people seem to understand in precisely the same way" (p. 1). A decade ago Steffire (1969) in a meeting of the National Manpower Advisory Committee on Counseling and Selection stated that

counseling denotes a professional relationship between a counselor and a client which is designed to help the client understand and clarify his view of life space so that he may make meaningful and informed choices constant with his essential nature at his particular circumstances in those areas where choices are available to him (p. 2).

Along the same line defining the word counseling, McClure (1978) said that "counseling is an activity where a person seeks to assist normally-functioning individuals to upgrade their abilities to master their environment" (p. 35). The definition of counseling as described by Steffire (1969) and McClure (1978) both establish counseling as a professional relationship between the counselor and the client, the purpose of which is to help the client to understand his/her environment better. However, in a socializing agency such as CETA, one must broaden the view of the counseling process to encompass activity and support beyond the one-to-one relationship of counselor to client.

Amos and Williams (1972) indicated that counseling must be more encompassing than a one-to-one professional relationship.

We see counseling as made up of a number of different elements that start with the first contact with the individual and cease some time either after placement on a job or whatever the end result might be. Phrasing this another way we would say that this experience might better be called a counseling process and all the various contacts, experiences, and supportive services that would be included in this total process could be seen as part of the actual counseling endeavor (p. 9).

The word counseling then, although it has many different meanings, can be described best as that process which enables the client to understand him/herself better with the help of a counselor who has the ability, skills, training, and knowledge to utilize all the available resources necessary to achieve that goal.

The Role of the CETA Counselor

Before the process of effective counseling can occur it is important for the counselor to understand what role he/she will play in the process of preparing disadvantaged persons for employment. Kaple and Kaple (1971) indicated that the role of the counselor is diverse and depends heavily on the number of clients that the counselor serves. The counselor in a small program may be the administrator who is responsible for all phases of the operation. In a larger program the counselor's duties may be more specialized and specifically outlined. Regardless of which type of program environment the counselor is in, his/her role usually involves some general types of activities. Kaple and Kaple (1971) suggested that several components comprise the major responsibilities of the counselor.

Orientation

This aspect of the counselor's job may entail such duties as helping to orient and provide in-service training for new staff members and acting as a resource person for staff members who work with disadvantaged persons. For this reason the counselor should understand and be able to communicate the sociological and psychological characteristics of the disadvantaged client.

Enrollment

The enrollment function of the CETA counselor is made up of recruiting clients into the program, conducting assessment and diagnostic tests to determine occupational capabilities, providing new clients with basic guideline information, and establishing and maintaining a record keeping system.

Support Services

This component may entail working with the Bureau of Employment Security, local educational institutions, and other agencies that provide employment, education, and training services. Also, the counselor could become involved with the job placement activity. He/she may help with job development or work with employers who could offer employment and training opportunities for clients.

Intervention

At times the counselor may find that he/she will have to justify a client's behavior by intervention. Kaple and Kaple (1971) said that "to intervene means to stick up for them (the clients). The counselor of the disadvantaged may find that he must be an advocate for his clients in the institutions of public education, with business, in the courts, and with public agencies" (p. 10).

As described, the counselor will be involved with many activities necessary to help disadvantaged persons. Although the duties of the counselor may vary, his/her major role is to help the client understand better the life environment in which he/she will function.

Characteristics of CETA Clients

In order to counsel the CETA client the counselor should have basic knowledge of the background characteristics of the client. However, the counselor should be careful not to prejudge the client as each and every client is a unique individual with a different background, different skills, and different goals. General characteristics of the type of person with whom the counselor will be involved can be grouped into two categories: sociological and social-psychological. Each set of characteristics is further defined as follows:

Sociological Characteristics

- a. There is more of a chance the client will be female than male.
- b. The client's educational level will probably be below that of the average.
- c. Because of a low educational level the client will tend to be economically disadvantaged.
- d. The client will probably have suffered from more unemployment than the average person.
- e. Previous jobs the client may have held could probably be classified as part-time, semi-skilled, or unskilled.
- f. The client will probably have come from a large family.
- g. The physical history of the client and his/her family will probably indicate more sickness, a higher rate of infant mortality, a lower life expectancy, and more dental defects than average.
- h. The client may not come from a good home environment or may be the product of a depressed geographic region.

Social-Psychological Characteristics

- a. The client will probably have a low self concept.
- b. The client may have developed an attitude of dependence on others for his/her well being.
- c. The client may have a limited perception of the value of education or training.
- d. The client will probably be more receptive to employment types of training rather than educational programs.
- e. The client may recognize that he/she has a problem with verbal communication. (Kaple and Kaple, 1971, pp. 12-13)

These characteristics have been presented in a general nature and will vary slightly in different settings. The CETA counselor should understand, however, that before effective counseling can

occur the counselor must know the client and understand the individual.

Counseling Components

The Employment and Training counselor serves a unique role in contemporary CETA programs. Most experienced Employment and Training specialists agree that the counselor is the "glue" that holds the related Adult Basic Education (ABE), skill training, placement, and follow-up components of most CETA programs together. That is, the linkages between these essential components should have consistent information provided to the client, instructors, and supervisors of the program. To a large extent this is the major responsibility of the CETA counselor. In practice a comprehensive CETA counseling program will include a variety of activities: (1) intake counseling, (2) testing and assessment, (3) crisis counseling, (4) group training and counseling, (5) individual employment counseling and guidance, (6) provision of ancillary and supportive services, and (7) placement and follow-up. Each of these activities may vary in application, depending upon the individual needs of the client.

Intake Counseling

Experience has shown that intake counseling is actually the least complicated of the CETA counseling activities. In most cases, intake counseling comprises three processes: (1) information giving, (2) orientation counseling, and (3) the collection of demographic data. The actual methods seem to vary little across the country. The most effective intake counseling function focuses upon individual rather than group methods. While this activity is not particularly complicated, it is important for the reader to recognize that client intake activities are critical to the success of CETA service delivery. Regardless of the type of CETA program, this activity is the first experience with CETA services that the client will receive. Experience has proven

that positive intake counseling experiences can have considerable influence upon CETA clients.

Testing and Assessment

A primary function of all CETA counselors evolves around the need to understand the interests, abilities, and potentials of CETA clients to benefit from CETA services. Testing and assessment activities serve to provide this information. Critical to testing and assessment is the recognition that the typical CETA client is very difficult to effectively test and assess. Many of the standardized instruments available are simply not valid or reliable. There are many reasons for this phenomena. The existence of cultural bias, wide variability in individual client characteristics, and lack of specific predictive capability of instruments all contribute to ineffective use of testing and assessment procedures. For these reasons, the CETA counselor should utilize a variety of assessment procedures to gain information necessary for client prediction. Using a variety of appropriate assessment techniques statistically increases predictive capability and at the same time, affords a better application of procedures to meet individual client needs. Figure 1 provides a listing of assessment procedures and instruments that are widely used.

Figure 1

Achievement Batteries and Reading Tests

- Adult Basic Learning Examination
- Davis Reading Test
- Gray Oral Reading Test
- Nelson-Denny Reading Test
- Nelson Reading Test
- Peabody Individual Achievement Test

Character and Personality

- California Psychological Inventory
- Edwards Personal Preference Schedule
- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory
- Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire

Intelligence

- Culture Fair Intelligence Test
- Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Tests
- Revised Beta Examination

Multi-Aptitude Batteries

- Differential Aptitude Test
- General Aptitude Test Battery
- Nonreading Aptitude Test Battery

Vocations - Clerical

- Minnesota Clerical Test
- SRA Clerical Aptitudes
- SRA Typing Skills
- Stenographic Aptitude Test

Vocations - Interests

- Kuder Occupational Interest Survey
- Minnesota Importance Questionnaire
- Minnesota Vocational Interest Inventory
- Ohio Vocational Interest Survey
- Picture Interest Inventory
- Strong Vocational Interest Blank

Vocations - Manual Dexterity

- Crawford Small Parts Dexterity Test
- Hand-Tool Dexterity Test
- Purdue Pegboard
- Stromberg Dexterity Test

Vocations - Mechanical Ability

- Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test
- O'Rourke Mechanical Aptitude Test
- Revised Minnesota Paper Form Board Test

Crisis Counseling

One of the most important counseling activities associated with the delivery of CETA services is that which attempts to neutralize or resolve the critical concerns and behaviors of clients during the delivery of CETA services. During most CETA program activities, clients have personal or programmatic problems that must be dealt with effectively if the clients are to be successful in the program. These problems may relate to the client's health, family, personality, abilities, values, goals, peers, legal

problems, or financial concerns. It is likewise important to note that the effective resolution or neutralization of these crisis issues requires counselor empathy, creative use of community resources, and a commitment on the part of the counselor to meet the individual needs of the client as they are perceived by the client. Only after such services are delivered can there be a reasonable expectation of client success. In most cases individual counseling methods will prove to be more effective than group methods. Close personal attention seems to be the "hall-mark" of truly effective crisis-counseling activities.

Group Training and Counseling

Most CETA counselors find a need to provide a variety of training activities for CETA clients. In many cases these activities are provided most effectively through the use of group counseling activities. The following list will illustrate the types of activities that may be provided through such activities:

1. Employer interview training
2. Job application preparation
3. Prevention of chemical abuse
4. Financial planning and budgeting
5. Personal hygiene training
6. Cultural enrichment training
7. Orientation to legal services
8. Health care
9. Relations with supervisors
10. Self concept development

Often such training or group activities are conducted with the cooperation of related instructors who specialize in the content being taught.

Individual Employment Counseling and Guidance

The provision of counseling and guidance relating to the client's potential for employment is an important activity in any

CETA program. Such counseling activities can generally be divided into five processes: (1) providing occupational information; (2) exploring occupational options; (3) counseling relating to the reality of client abilities, potential for training, and available resources; (4) giving information relating to training; and (5) resolution, goal setting, and planning. These processes require the use of a wide variety of both individual and group methods. Important to the individual employment counseling and guidance activity is the use of testing and assessment information discussed previously. This information is the basis for informed counseling and guidance.

Provision of Ancillary and Supportive Services

The CETA counselor should be prepared to utilize community, program, and individual resources to support the unique needs of CETA clients. The following list of ancillary and supportive needs should be addressed when appropriate:

1. Transportation requirements
2. Lack of lodging
3. Insufficient food
4. Lack of clothing
5. Lack of tools
6. Medical problems
7. Legal problems
8. Financial problems

To provide appropriate ancillary and supportive services, the counselor should identify available resources within the community and CETA delivery system. Other agencies and organizations (i.e. welfare, rehabilitation, Veterans, Housing and Urban Development, Legal Aid, and Salvation Army) may be able to provide the appropriate services that will enable the CETA client to continue successfully in the CETA program without undue personal hardships.

Placement and Follow-up

Although job requirements vary, some CETA counselors are required to place clients in employment situations and to follow-up the placement to provide continued counseling support and to collect program evaluation data. If appropriate counseling activities have been conducted, and if a quality training program has been provided to clients, the placement and follow-up activity will be relatively uncomplicated. It is important to develop a consistent procedure for identifying potential employers, matching employer/client characteristics and needs, and collecting follow-up information. Also critical, is an ongoing, personal relationship with potential employers. Experience has pointed to the reality of personal relationships as the principal factor to successful placement and follow-up. Likewise counselor credibility with the employer facilitates future placements with that employer.

Counseling Methods, Techniques, and Processes

CETA counselors often find that a wide assortment of counseling methods, techniques, and processes are appropriate for application within CETA programs. For the purposes of this monograph, it seems appropriate to divide these activities into the following two categories: individual and group.

Prior to a more detailed description of each of the above mentioned categories, it also seems appropriate to state briefly a series of basic assumptions that must be considered for a counselor to be truly effective with the special client of today's Employment and Training programs. Critical to these assumptions is an appreciation on the part of the counselor of the need for empathy or understanding of the client's problems. Such empathy should not be confused with sympathy. CETA clients often perceive that sympathetic counselors exhibit paternalistic behavior. Upon perceiving such behavior, clients will often react negatively

and this may adversely affect program success.

Assumption 1: Thinking, feeling, and doing have a causal relationship. The effective counselor will seek to create a counseling environment that requires action of the client. There is no room for passive client involvement in a CETA counseling program.

Assumption 2: Client effectiveness is judged by positive client change. Only activities that promote or create a change in the attitudes or behavior of clients should be initiated by the CETA counselor. Counseling should not be done for the sake of counseling. Such a premise requires that CETA counselors know and can predict specific methods and procedures that will affect client change.

Assumption 3: Inappropriate counselor behavior will result in unproductive, even abusive effects on the client.

Assumption 4: Client's perception of reality must be dealt with prior to the counselor's perceptions. The CETA client will be more receptive to a counseling process if the process is focused upon a resolution of the client's concerns rather than the problems that have been identified by the counselor. Such a process will then create a level of counselor/client credibility that will allow the counselor to attend to his/her priorities.

Assumption 5: Distasteful mannerisms and unlikable behavioral patterns demonstrated by CETA clients may in fact result from cultural differences. Such mannerisms and behavior should be recognized and respected as possible values resulting from cultural conditioning. Reality counseling may modify client behavior, but the decision to modify that behavior must result from a client's acceptance of an intrusion into his/her cultural values.

Assumption 6: Success breeds success. All counseling activities should focus upon the development of success experiences

for the client. This requires creativity and an understanding of a wide variety of counseling techniques.

Assumption 7: Life-long history of failure, low level, deadend jobs, few options, and frustrated aspirations lead to low self-esteem and easy discouragement. Counselors must recognize the reality of client history. Years of environmental conditioning creates barriers to counseling success that are, in some cases, insurmountable.

Assumption 8: CETA clients have a history of failure in traditional, lock-step, institutionalized educational and training approaches. It is therefore essential to develop non-traditional creative counseling approaches to support CETA programs.

Assumption 9: The differing kind and degree of client needs indicate variety of input, expertise, and opportunity. Team approaches are often utilized to account for this assumption. Team work results in more training and placement input, allowance for personality and cultural differences, and finally, appropriate application of a broad range of counselor expertise.

Individual Methods, Techniques and Processes

Creative use of individual counseling methods, techniques, and processes are critical to effective CETA counseling. As stated previously, CETA clients have tremendous variability in their interests, abilities, learning potential, self-concepts, and personalities. These factors, among others, provide a situation that in many cases, can be served only by individually applied counseling methods. The following individual counseling methods, techniques, and processes should be considered essential in any CETA counseling program:

1. Listening and reflective feedback - to provide a "mirror" of the clients' concern whereby clients can see their behavior and attitudes as others see them.

2. Information giving - to provide a source of information that will enhance the clients' understanding of occupational factors and requirements, training program procedures, and supportive resources.

3. Intervention - a process whereby the counselor finds it necessary to defend, stick up for, or interview on behalf of the client.

4. Data collection and documentation - to provide the base of information whereby appropriate management and training decisions can be made.

5. Crisis counseling - a process that provides support to a client who has a problem that may affect his/her success in a program.

6. Informal methods - those simple congenial relationships (e.g. coffee breaks, accidental meetings) that allow for information sharing and support of client involvement in program activities.

7. Goal setting and planning activities - focused activities that provide a target for client success in training, personal relation, employment, and future growth.

8. Contracting - a method whereby the clients negotiate and ultimately agree to meet certain objectives in the CETA program.

Group Methods, Techniques and Processes

In some programs, particularly class-size of total institutional programs, many of the counseling objectives can be met best through the use of group methods. Experience has shown that the following methods, techniques, and processes often prove effective:

1. Training/Instructional Activities - often used to provide nontraditional training to clients (i.e. personal hygiene training, filling out job applications, etc.).

2. Role Playing - used to teach groups to react, behave, and think in certain situations (i.e. job interviewing, supervisory relations, etc.).

3. Use of Video Tape - often used to stimulate discussion and reflection of peer perceptions.

4. Trainee Support Teams - often called employability teams, these teams are usually composed of an instructor, counselor, administrator, and sometimes clients. The team serves as an advisory council to the client. The group provides a flexible supportive counseling team that is often better prepared to support the client's individual needs than an individual counselor.

5. Peer Review - used in some group activities to provide peer pressure and reflection to individual training.

6. Group Exploration - a process whereby the group is oriented through use of media, visitations to business/industry, and guest speakers to the world of employment and other related training needs.

7. Utilization of counselor behavior - the purpose is to stimulate or re-orient the group and is often accomplished by the following counselor behaviors: identifying - clarifying, labeling, confronting, questioning, summarizing, interpreting, restating, developing linkages, initiating, reassuring, encouraging, supporting, interviewing, dealing with silence, recognizing and explaining nonverbal behavior, restraining - cooling off, goal setting, and facilitating closure.

8. Use of consensus seeking techniques - designed to build teams within groups whereby certain activities can be accomplished.

9. Use of Dyads or Triads - often used for team building and the building of peer support which enhanced self-concept.

10. Fantasy or Scenario Building - used as a technique that helps reluctant clients to disclose their innermost feelings and thoughts.

11. Role Shifting - is a technique whereby group members see how they are perceived by others. It also serves as an excellent feedback device.

Counseling is recognized as an important component in any employment and training activity. Unfortunately, many counselors find themselves to be ineffective because of administrative misinformation relating to the purpose, role, and expectations of the counseling process.

Caseloads

Caseload management is a critical factor in any CETA counseling activity. The size of the counseling load will depend upon the actual responsibilities of the counselor, types of clients being served, geographical service area, and types of programs being utilized. In extremely restrictive situations, the counselor/client ratios may be as low as 20 clients per counselor while other situations might find that adequate support can be provided by a counseling ratio of 60:1.

Paperwork

Probably the most restrictive practice to the effectiveness of counselors is an administrative demand for large quantities of paperwork from the counselor. Such a practice can dramatically decrease the available service time of the counseling staff and ultimately result in a reduction of program quality.

Summary

Counseling is a necessary and important component of CETA programs. The counselor needs to bring to the counseling process an understanding of the counseling role as defined in his/her particular environment, a basic knowledge of the characteristics of the clientele, and an awareness of the variety of components included in a comprehensive counseling program. The counselor should also be familiar with a variety of counseling techniques from which to choose in order to meet the demands of each unique situation. A well informed counselor with a genuine interest in the client is a basic necessary ingredient for a successful experience.

Creative and truly effective CETA counseling depends upon an administrative recognition of the worth of counseling, competently trained counselors, and resources to support the counseling process. As these are provided, research has consistently shown that CETA program quality is enhanced greatly.

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